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ABSTRACT

Based on past experience in adult education (largely literacy education) in Tanzania, a new approach is suggested. Adult education activities should be organized around skills which are reinforcing in their own right, such as masonry, mechanics, carpentry, or vegetable growing, and with immediate use in the post-training environment. Literacy teaching should be a follow-up and not a first step. Initially all teaching of illiterates should be by auditory means; having got the people involved in the learning process, literacy can be introduced gradually, by pointing out its facilitative effect; and to maintain the reading ability, a good supply of carefully selected material should be made available. More emphasis should be made to reach as many people as possible, especially in the rural areas so that Tanzania Socialism can be made a reality. (Author/EB)

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ADULT EDUCATION IN TANZANIA

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1. Introduction:

Adult Education has beed defined as "a process whereby persons who no longer attend school on a regular and full-time basis (Unless full-time programs are especially designed for adults) undertake sequential and organised activities with the conscious intention of bringing about changes in information, knowledge and understanding or skills, appreciation and attitudes, or for the purpose of identifying and solving personal or community problems". Defined in this way adult education would include literacy and fundamental education, family problems as well as vocational or job training, education about health as well as education about physical and personal development, community development, social education, political and civic education; religious and economic education and a variety of other educational programs designed primarily for adults.(2) In this connection an adult is defined as one who when asked of his occupation, would not say student; i.e. spends most of his time in pursuits not usually considered educational.

In Tanzania, there are many agencies and institutions which carry out one or more of the above programs for adults. These agencies include co-operatives, community centres, Home Craft centres, and Institutions such as the Goethe Institute, Alliance Francaise and above all the Institute of Adult Education of the University of Dar es Salaam.

The Role of Adult Education:

An attempt will be made in this paper to outline the relevance to Tanzania of some of the adult education programs mentioned above:

(i) One function of adult education is to provide vacational and job training. At the start such

training would include training in simple mannual skills, how to make simple equipment repair and maintain machinery A considerable amount of man-hours are lost through lack of these simple skills Those already trained in the various trades can go for refresher courses or work for higher certificates. A "do it yourself" attitude and inclination would help many to save up their income, and even supplement it.

(ii) Another function of adult education is to educate the people politically. The concepts embodied in the Arusha Declaration are alien to most Tanzanians brought up in the colonial period. These new concepts need to be disseminated to as many people as can be reached. The more Tanzanians are involved in the political process, the more the political order is strengthened. This does not necessarily require that the people be literate. Seminars and radio talks could easily do the job. Ability to read would of course help those interested to further themselves.

(iii) A third function of adult education is to train leaders at all levels of the community. Such training should be particularly for those people who inspire confidence and respect among their neighbours. If such people can be made to understand and appreciate the need and importance of adult education per se, then the problem of getting more people involved in adult education activities would have been partly overcome. It is at the grass root level that good leadership is required, as it is at this level that the success of the Tanzanian socialism really depends upon.

(iv) A further function of adult education in Tanzania is to equip primary and secondary school leavers for life in Ujamaa Villages. The formal type of education, especially prior to the publication of "Education for Self-Reliance," tended to encourage people to seek white collar jobs What is required is to re-educate - through adult education - the people for life in Ujamaa Villages

(v) Adult Education should also provide opportunities for the continuance of one's education and broadening one's knowledge. With the present trend of specialization during formal schooling and the rapid technological development one's education becomes obsolete fairly quickly. Through adult education, those concerned about the rapid social changes can have their quest for knowledge and interests catered for. Institutions of adult education and private agencies go a long way towards fulfilling these functions. But because of their location and rather limited resources, the majority of the people are unable to participate. It is encouraging to learn that more regional centres are to be established; and with the introduction of the correspondence course, still more people will have a chance of furthering themselves.

Teaching Literacy:

One major function of adult education in Tanzania is the teaching of literacy It has been estimated that 80% of the population is illiterate All out attempts are being made now to reach these people, and this year, in particular has been declared as the year for adult education, with special attention to the illiterates. (Mafia and Ukerewe Islands must be literate by the end of 1971). The latest figures August, 1970 from the District Education Officers' responsible for adult education show that 793,247 enrolled for classes in various subjects. Out of these 166,412 or 63% enrolled for literacy classes, and 59.0% of the literacy students are women.

From the figures above, it appears that a lot of people are enrolling for classes, including literacy. This, I would say, is a result of the campaign to encourage people to participate in adult education activities. So far, no reliable attendance figures have been compiled for all the districts. There are a few results from the Mwanza Literacy Project which show that drop-outs and irregular attendance is a major problem. (7) In the Busega sub-pilot area drop-out was 29 7% and irregular attendance 21. .%. Preliminary results of the District Education Officer Survey by the Institute of Adult Education also shows that 39% of the D.E.O. reported drop-out and irregular attendance as a major problem.

On the whole, one can say that the situation is not discouraging but there is still room for improvement.

More results from the Mwanza projects also show that more older people (over 35 years) enroll than younger people (under 35 years). Another problem is that, literacy teachers have been hard to recruit and many of these that are recruited do not keep at it for long, with the consequence result that classes close down. Some reasons for this finding are that the honarium of 30/- p.m. given to these teachers has not been good enough; when better job is offered they leave. Another reason is that in remote areas, there are few educated people to take these classes. To partly remedy this situation, primary school teachers have now been given the responsibility of organizing and running adult education activities in their areas. This extra responsibility has not been warmly welcome by the teachers.

4. Factors which may account for the above findings:

Two basic motivational factors for participating in educational activities are the general awareness of education as a positive value for solving problems in a general sense, and the equating of education with happiness and success. (5) This second factor is particularly relevant here in Tanzania where the educated people are seen as happy and successful; i.e. are employed. It is the employment factor which I think, is the most important one.

Therefore one obvious reason for the poor enrolment and attendance is that the type of formal education given has tended to prepare people for employment; and because employment is not possible for literacy classes graduates, they see no need to participate. This would apply to most of the young people. With the growing numbers of primary school leavers who cannot find employment literacy classes graduates' chances of being employed are nil This feeling of powerlessness would also apply to older people who do not join these classes. They may feel that it is too late for them to learn anything worth while at such an age; and even if they did who would emply them.

A second reason for non-participation by young people is that in rural areas where age-group associations exist and are strong, group cohesion may prevent the members from

attending adult education classes, especially, when these are likely to interfere with the groups' normal activities. A way must be found in such areas to use these associations for adult education activities.

Social psychology studies have shown that people behave according to specific reference groups whose standards they may or may not aspire to achieve. And the level of aspiration of an individual has been found to be lowered when reference is made to a superior group, and raised when reference is made to an inferior group. Here in Tanzania education, including literacy is highly valued. Now the question is: Why in a society where education is highly valued do those people with little education participate the least? Is it because they set their level of aspiration so low as not to participate? Or is it because there are no people who have succeeded sufficiently by coming literate, through adult education, to act as a reference group, whose standards they may want to achieve, even though at lower level? Further research is needed in order to answer these questions. Lack of a superior reference group - a group that has succeeded through adult education, is a third factor which may account for the not so high enrollment figures, irregular attendance and drop-out.

A fourth factor which may account for the drop-out and irregular attendance is that literacy students, however, highly motivated they may be, go to enrol with some feeling of inadequancy. Should a prospective learner feel rejected or given "impossible" things to do at the first school contact he may give up altogether. On the other hand should he find this first school contact pleasureable, he may overcome many barriers. This point should be borne in mind when training teachers and literacy classes organizers. These people should have training in communication skills human relation skills and the psychology of adult learners

The above is not is by no means an exhaustive list of factors which may account for the present findings.

5. Suggestion for improvement

The question now is, how can we improve the situation? The people must be taught to read and write because it is believed that this ability isa useful one. Formerly, participation in an educational activity was likely to lead to some employment, hence its usefulness. But these days

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employment is not easily obtainable if not altogether impossible and therefore education unless it is of a higher level would seem to have lost its usefulness At an abstract level, education, however basic is useful and for this reason it must be spread to as wide an audience as possible. Literacy facilitates the acquisition of other more obviously useful behaviours. But the usefulness of that final behaviour must be demonstrated and not assumed

Suppose that the study of philosophy facilitates the learning of other skills. Is this a sufficient reason for studying it? A practical question could be asked as to whether this same degree of facilitation could result from instruction in another subject such as cabinet making. Perhaps the study of cabinet making teaches one to think as well as does philosophy. This means cabinet making rather than philosophy be studied if performance in cabinet making is also known to be reinforced in its own right, in addition to serving as a vehicle for the component skills of thinking. In more abstract terms this means that of several types of skills available for producing a generalized ability the skill that will also be reinforcing in its own right should be trained

What I am trying to say here is that, literacy in itself is not reinforcing, as it can be seen from the statistics given above. Therefore, other skills which may be reinforcing should be identified and tried. Vocational skills such as capentry,mechanics, masonry etc. which may have immediate use should be taught. Because of their immediate application in the post-trainin g period, they will be reinforcing; and because the students are illiterate, auditory means of teaching should be used. Traditional societies have passed on knowledge for generations by auditory means only. (6) Having got the people involved in the learning process, of the various skills, literacy can be introduced as a follow-up. Auditory means of teaching may succeed as a first step method in that it will by-pass the use of symbols which must be grasped first before the content of the material is assimilated.

The Lushoto Integrated Development Project at Soni has made fantastic progress in its short period of existence The programme consists of 16 sub-projects varying from vegetable growing, masonry to knitting All of the training is done in a practical manner and literacy is not a requirement for participation. The training is on practical knowledge which

can be used in the rural areas immediately.

The functional literacy project in Mwanza is not doing so well. The reason for this would be that literacy has been made as the first step rather than as a follow-up. The people must learn to read and write before they can grow good quality cash crop.

To some extent the proposals in this paper are an attempt to suggest a different approach; however, they are not the only lines along which solutions might be found. The suggestions are a step in a continual process of changes as problems goals and conditions alter. Adult education activities should be organised around skills which are reinforcing in their own right and with immediate use in the post-training environment Literacy teaching should be a follow - up and not a first step. Initially all teaching of illiterates should be by auditory means; having got the people involved in the learning process, literacy can be introduced gradually, by pointing out its facilitative effect; and to maintain the reading ability, a good supply of carefully selected material should be made available. More emphasis should be made to reach as many people as possible, especially in the rural areas so that Tanzania Socialism can be made a reality.

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